

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 13-20 are pending in the application. By the Amendment, claims 1, 2, 7, 13, 14, and 16-18 are amended, new claims 19 and 20 are added, and claims 3, 6, and 8-12 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. No new material has been introduced into the application. Support for the claims can be found throughout the original specification, including original claims and the drawings, for example, at page 27, lines 1-19. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Abstract and the indicated paragraphs of the specification are amended for minor informalities. No new matter has been introduced in the application.

The Office Action, at page 2, rejects claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite, and claims 14-18 as dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Office Action, at page 5, indicates that claims 13-18 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that grounds for the rejection are obviated by the above non-narrowing amendments to claim 13.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 13-18 are allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested. New claims 19 and 20 ultimately depend from claim 13, and thus are allowable for at least the same reasons, as well as additional patentable features recited therein and the combinations thereof.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,049,986 to Aono et al. in view of Ganapathy et al. (U.S. Patent Application

Publication No. 2003/0044062). Because the references, individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all the features of the claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

With respect to claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that subject matter indicated to be allowable in claim 13 is incorporated in claim 1 for the sole purpose of expediting prosecution of the application. Therefore, claim 1 defines patentable subject matter.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2, 4, and 5 depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1, and thus are allowable for at least the reasons, as well as additional patentable features recited therein and the combinations thereof. Claims 3 and 6 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, and the rejection of claims 3 and 6 is therefore moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

With respect to independent claim 7, Applicants respectfully submit that subject matter indicated to be allowable in claim 12 is incorporated in claim 7, along with the subject matter of the intervening claims, for the sole purpose of expediting prosecution of the application. Therefore, claim 7 defines patentable subject matter.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 7 is allowable. Claims 8-12 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, and the rejection of claims 8-12 is therefore moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

Amendment dated: June 21, 2004

Response to Office Action dated: February 20, 2004

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, **Garth D. Richmond**, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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